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TAGS: SREF, TH, US, MASS, UN

SUBJECT: HFAC-SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON S.E. ASIA REFUGEES

SUMMARY. EAP ASST SECRETARY WOLFOWITZ AND RP DIRECTOR PURCELL TESTIFIED BEFORE THE HFAC EAST ASIA SUBCOMMITTEE APRIL 5. CHAIRMAN SOLARZ CALLED FOR INCREASED ANTI-PIRACY ACTION AND SUPPORTED A SEPARATE ORDERLY DEPARTURE PROGRAM (ODP) CEILING, AS DID SEN. MARK HATFIELD, WHO ALSO TESTIFIED. HATFIELD STATED HIS OPPOSITION TO THE LUNDGREN AMENDMENT TO THE REFUGEE ACT REAUTHORIZATION BILL AND EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT ODP ADMISSIONS NOT COME AT THE EXPENSE OF FIRST ASYLUM NUMBERS. IN HIS STATEMENT ASST. SEC. WOLFOWITZ STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION ON REFUGEES TO OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ASSURED THE SUBCOMMITTEE THAT PIRACY AND THE PRESERVATION OF FIRST ASYLUM WOULD BE ON THE AGENDA FOR THAI PM PREM'S VISIT. RP DIRECTOR PURCELL'S STATEMENT OUTLINED THE GENERALLY FAVORABLE DOWNWARD TREND IN REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN FIRST ASYLUM VERSUS THIRD COUNTRY RESETTLEMENT AND THE CONTINUING US COMMITMENT TO DO MORE TO END PIRACY AND TO EXPAND ODP. THE SUBCOMMITTEE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT THE \$5 MILLION EARMARKED FOR ANTI-PIRACY WAS NOT BEING USED EXPEDITIOUSLY TO STRENGTHEN THE PROGRAM. TWO PRIVATE-SECTOR WITNESSES BOTH CALLED FOR INCREASED USG LEADERSHIP IN SOLVING REFUGEE PROBLEMS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. END SUMMARY.

1. ON APRIL 5, EAP ASST SECRETARY WOLFOWITZ AND RP DIRECTOR PURCELL TESTIFIED BEFORE THE HFAC'S EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF THE REFUGEE PROGRAM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. OTHER WITNESSES WERE SEN. MARK HATFIELD, CHAIRMAN, SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES DIRECTOR, ROGER WINTER AND CAMBODIAN CRISIS COMMITTEE DIRECTOR, PETER L. POND.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL

84 3884760

SCP

PAGE 002
TOR: 120627Z APR 84

NC 3884760

2. SOLARZ STATEMENT: SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, STEPHEN SOLARZ (D.-N.Y.) LED OFF WITH A SHORT STATEMENT OUTLINING HIS PRIMARY CONCERNS WITH REGARD TO THE REFUGEE PROGRAM: WHAT IS BEING DONE TO COMBAT PIRACY? ARE WE DOING ENOUGH TO HELP THE THAI? HAS ANYTHING DEVELOPED FROM SRV FOREIGN MINISTER THACH'S JUNE 1982 STATEMENT THAT THE SRV WOULD RELEASE RE-EDUCATION CAMP PRISONERS? SHOULD AN ODP PROGRAM BE INSTITUTED FOR CAMBODIANS? HE CLOSED BY EXPRESSING PLEASURE AT THE RECENT ARREST AND CONVICTION OF FOUR PIRATES BY THE THAI AUTHORITIES.

3. HATFIELD STATEMENT: SEN. HATFIELD (R.-ORE.) COMMENDED THE DEPARTMENT FOR "TURNING AROUND" THE REFUGEE PROCESSING SITUATION IN S.E. ASIA AND FOR THE ANTICIPATED REACHING OF THE 50,000 ADMISSIONS CEILING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FY-84. HE THEN REFERRED TO TWO CONTINUING PROBLEMS WHICH HE PERCEIVED: (1) THE LUNDGREN AMENDMENT AND (2) THE DANGER THAT ODP ADMISSIONS WOULD COME AT THE EXPENSE OF THOSE FROM FIRST ASYLUM COUNTRIES. HE SAID THE LUNDGREN AMENDMENT, IF ENACTED INTO LAW, WOULD "GUT THE WHOLE REFUGEE POLICY" BY DRIVING VOLUNTARY AGENCIES OUT OF THE RESETTLEMENT BUSINESS DUE TO THEIR INABILITY TO SHOULDER THE FINANCIAL BURDEN WHICH THE AMENDMENT WOULD PLACE ON THEM.- HE SAID HE WOULD TRY TO DELETE THE AMENDMENT FROM THE REAUTHORIZATION BILL OR TO HAVE IT MODIFIED.

4. HATFIELD WARNED THAT INCREASED ODP ADMISSIONS COULD MEAN A REDUCTION IN THOSE DMITTED FROM FIRST ASYLUM COUNTRIES. HE SAID THAT MANY ODP EXIT PERMITS WERE OBTAINED THROUGH BRIBES AND THAT IT WOULD BE UNJUST TO ADMIT THESE PEOPLE WHILE MANY, MORE DESERVING, REFUGEES REMAINED IN FIRST ASYLUM CAMPS. THERE WAS ALSO THE POSSIBLE PERCEPTION THAT WE WOULD BE "TURNING OUR BACKS ON OUR FRIENDS", THE FIRST ASYLUM COUNTRIES, WHILE ACCEPTING REFUGEES DIRECT FROM VIETNAM. HATFIELD (AND LATER SOLARZ) SUPPORTED THE CREATION OF A SEPARATE CEILING FOR ODP ADMISSIONS AS A WAY PROTECTING FIRST ASYLUM ADMISSION NUMBERS FROM ENCROACHMENT BY ODP.

5. WOLFOWITZ STATEMENT: IN HIS PREPARED STATEMENT ASST. SEC. WOLFOWITZ SUMMARIZED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN DEALING WITH THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE CRISIS, NOTED THAT COOPERATION IN DEALING WITH THE CRISIS HAD SIGNIFICANTLY REINFORCED THE TRUST BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE KEY FRIENDLY NATIONS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND POINTED TO VIETNAM AS THE REAL SOURCE AND ULTIMATE SOLUTION OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM. LATER, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS BY CHAIRMAN SOLARZ, WOLFOWITZ STATED THAT ANTI-PIRACY MEASURES WOULD BE ONE OF THE TOPICS ON THE AGENDA FOR THE TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER PREM, AS WOULD THE NEED FOR THAILAND TO MAINTAIN ITS FIRST ASYLUM ROLE.

6. PURCELL STATEMENT: RP DIRECTOR PURCELL DESCRIBED THE CURRENT INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROCESSING SITUATION, NOTING THAT ARRIVALS IN FIRST ASYLUM WERE DOWN AND THAT RESETTLEMENT TO THE U.S. AND OTHER THIRD COUNTRIES WAS UP OVER LAST YEAR. HE SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT FIRST ASYLUM WAS NOT CURRENTLY THREATENED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, BUT THAT THE U.S. AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAD TO CONTINUE TO SHOULDER THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM FACING FIRST ASYLUM COUNTRIES. PURCELL POINTED TO THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ODP DEPARTURES AND THE DECREASE IN BOAT ARRIVALS AS ANOTHER POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. HE STRESSED THAT THE U.S. WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT A LARGER NUMBER OF ODP CASES, BUT THAT THE SRV STILL HAD NOT PRESENTED US WITH EITHER A LIST OF RE-EDUCATION CAMP PRISONERS OF

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

84 3884760 SCP

PAGE 003
TOR: 120627Z APR 84

NC 3884760

INTEREST TO US, NOR THE LONG-PROMISED LIST OF
ASIAN-AMERICANS.

7. PURCELL OUTLINED THE CONTINUING ANTI-PIRACY EFFORT AND THE PREPARATION OF THE NEW UNHCR ANTI-PIRACY PROGRAM SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN JULY 1984. HE NOTED THE DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF PIRATE ATTACKS, AND THAT TOGETHER WITH THE UNHCR AND THE RTG, WE WERE PLANNING A GREATLY EXPANDED ANTI-PIRACY EFFORT. HE REFERRED TO THE RECENT CONVICTION OF FOUR PIRATES AS A "VERY FAVORABLE AND POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT" AND COMMENDED THE THAI GOVERNMENT FOR "THIS ACT OF DIFFICULT AND RESPONSIBLE LAW ENFORCEMENT". PURCELL TOUCHED ON THE PLANS FOR THE USE OF THE \$5 MILLION IN EARMARKED ANTI-PIRACY FUNDS, STATING THAT A DEFINITIVE PROGRAM WOULD HAVE TO BE AGREED TO BETWEEN THE UNHCR AND THE RTG AND APPROVED BY THE DONOR COUNTRIES BEFORE WE COULD BEGIN FUNDING IT.

8. PURCELL CONCLUDED HIS STATEMENT BY DESCRIBING THE CURRENT SITUATION ON THE THAI BORDER, WHERE 228,000 KHMER REMAINED ENCAPPED. BOTH PURCELL AND WOLFOWITZ CONFIRMED THAT, SO FAR AT LEAST, THE VIETNAMESE DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE THIS YEAR HAD NOT OCCURRED ON THE SCALE THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED FROM PREVIOUS YEARS. PURCELL ALSO SAID THAT WE DID NOT FORESEE WIDESPREAD FOOD SHORTAGES IN CAMBODIA THIS YEAR, DESPITE PREDICTIONS TO THE CONTRARY. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT THE U.S. AND OTHER DONOR NATIONS WERE SKEPTICAL OF THE HARVEST AND POPULATION FIGURES USED BY THE RECENT FAO ASSESSMENT TEAM, BUT THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION. (PETER POND, WHO SPOKE LATER, WAS LESS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FOOD SITUATION).

9. ANTI-PIRACY: IN THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOLLOWING THE PREPARED STATEMENTS, THE SUBCOMMITTEE CONCENTRATED ON THE ANTI-PIRACY PROGRAM AND THE NEED TO DO MORE TO END THE MURDERS, RAPES AND BEATINGS. CHAIRMAN SOLARZ AND CONGRESSMAN GILMAN WERE PARTICULARLY EMPHATIC ABOUT WHAT THEY PERCEIVED AS THE INADEQUACY OF THE PRESENT ANTI-PIRACY EFFORT AND THE SLOWNESS WITH WHICH THE EFFORT WAS BEING IMPROVED. SOLARZ SAID HE WAS NOT PLEASED TO HEAR THAT \$800,000 OF THE \$5 MILLION EARMARKED FOR ANTI-PIRACY PROGRAMS IN FY-84 HAD BEEN CONTRIBUTED TOWARD THE CURRENT UNHCR ANTI-PIRACY EFFORT. HE SAID THAT THE "WILL OF CONGRESS" HAD BEEN THAT THE \$5 MILLION WAS SUPPOSED TO BE "IN ADDITION" TO THE AMOUNT HERETOFORE GIVEN TO THE UNHCR FOR ANTI-PIRACY.

10. PURCELL RESPONDED THAT THE \$5 MILLION WOULD BE USED BOTH FOR UNHCR-SPONSORED ANTI-PIRACY PROGRAMS AND, POSSIBLY, FOR DIRECT U.S.-FUNDED PROJECTS. PURCELL EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE WAY THE ANTI-PIRACY PROGRAM HAD BEEN GOING AND THAT THE UNHCR ASSESSMENT TEAM AND OUR OWN ANTI-PIRACY TASK FORCE HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED TO COME UP WITH WAYS TO IMPROVE THE PROGRAM. WE NOW HAD THE FINDINGS OF BOTH THESE STUDIES AND WOULD BE MOVING TO IMPLEMENT THEM AFTER JULY 1, AS SOON AS THE UNHCR, THE RTG AND THE OTHER DONOR COUNTRIES HAD SIGNED-OFF ON THE EXPANDED PROGRAM. SOLARZ WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN STARTING A PROGRAM OF REWARDS TO FISHERMEN WHO SIGHTED BOAT REFUGEES AND REPORTED THEIR WHEREABOUTS TO THE THAI GOVERNMENT SO THAT BOATS COULD BE DISPATCHED TO RESCUE THEM. HE THOUGHT THAT SOME PART OF THE \$5 MILLION SHOULD BE USED FOR SUCH REWARDS. PURCELL SAID THAT PRELIMINARY REPORTS ON THE MALAYSIAN REWARDS PROGRAM WERE GOOD.

11. ORDERLY DEPARTURE PROGRAM. AFTER ANTI-PIRACY, THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S PRIMARY CONCERN SEEMED TO BE THE UNHCR'S

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

84 3884760

SCP

PAGE 004
TOR: 120627Z APR 84

NC 3884760

ODP. CHAIRMAN SOLARZ ASKED IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY PROGRESS ON OBTAINING THE RELEASE OF RE-EDUCATION CAMP POLITICAL PRISONERS. MR. PURCELL RESPONDED THAT OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SRV POSITION WAS THAT THEY WOULD ONLY RELEASE THE INMATES IF WE WOULD GUARANTEE IN ADVANCE TO TAKE ALL THOSE RELEASED. THIS WE WOULD NOT DO, PURCELL STATED, AND WE CONTINUED TO PUSH FOR ICRC ADMISSION TO THE CAMPS, THE CONDITIONS OF WHICH WE UNDERSTOOD WERE HORRIFIC, AND FOR A CENSUS OF THE INMATES SO WE COULD DECIDE WHO WOULD QUALIFY FOR THE ODP PROGRAM. PURCELL ALSO NOTED THAT WE HAD GIVEN THE SRV A LIST OF PEOPLE WE KNEW WERE IN THE RE-EDUCATION CAMPS AND WERE QUALIFIED FOR U.S. ADMISSION, BUT SO FAR THE SRV HAD NOT INCLUDED ANY OF THESE PEOPLE ON ITS LISTS. IN AN EXCHANGE WITH CONGRESSMAN PRITCHARD, PURCELL POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH MANY ODP APPLICANTS HAD PAID BRIBES TO GET OUT OF VIETNAM, IT WAS ALSO TRUE THAT BOAT REFUGEES PAID BRIBES TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY CLANDESTINELY. IN A DISCUSSION OF THE FY-85 CEILING FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA, SOLARZ EMPHATICALLY ENDORSED THE IDEA OF A SEPARATE ODP CEILING AND SAID THAT HE HOPED THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD MAINTAIN THE 50,000 ADMISSIONS LEVEL FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA. MR. PURCELL RESPONDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS PLANNING TO PROPOSE A SEPARATE ODP CEILING FOR FY-85 AND THAT IF CONGRESS FUNDED INDOCHINESE ADMISSIONS AT THE 50,000 LEVEL, WE WOULD SEEK TO PROCESS REFUGEES AT THAT RATE. SOLARZ SUGGESTED THAT SOME THOUGHT BE GIVEN TO AN ODP FOR CAMBODIA. PURCELL SAID THAT WE HAD CONSIDERED BY NOT EXTENSIVELY STUDIED THIS POSSIBILITY.

13. SOLARZ ALSO WANTED TO KNOW WHY MORE ASIAN-AMERICANS WERE NOT LEAVING UNDER THE ODP PROGRAM. PURCELL STATED THAT WE WERE STILL WAITING FOR THE SRV'S LIST OF ASIAN-AMERICANS. HE SAID THAT THE SRV HAD AGREED TO ALLOW SOME 600 ASIAN-AMERICANS TO LEAVE IN FY-83, OUT OF A TOTAL OF 6000 DEPARTURES DURING THAT FISCAL YEAR. OUR BEST GUESS WAS THAT THERE WERE 6-8,000 ASIAN-AMERICANS IN VIETNAM. WE WERE PREPARED TO PROCESS THEM AND THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS THROUGH THE ODP WHENEVER THEIR CASES WERE PRESENTED TO US.

14. KHMER ADMISSIONS. SOLARZ WANTED TO KNOW THE STATUS OF THE KHMER PROCESSING AT KHAO-I-DANG AND WHETHER THERE WAS STARVATION AMONG THE UNDOCUMENTED KHMER THERE. PURCELL RESPONDED THAT KHMER WERE BEING PROCESSED AS A HIGH PRIORITY AND THAT WE EXPECTED TO PROCESS ALL ELIGIBLE KHMER BY THE END OF FY-85. HE SAID THAT WE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY OF THE UNDOCUMENTED KHMER WERE SUFFERING FROM STARVATION.

15. STATEMENTS BY ROGER WINTER AND PETER POND. IN HIS STATEMENT, ROGER WINTER OF THE U.S. REFUGEE COMMITTEE CONTENDED THAT THE U.S. HAD "BACKED OFF" FROM ITS LEADERSHIP ROLE IN REFUGEE AFFAIRS WORLDWIDE AND THAT THE CONDITION OF REFUGEES HAD DETERIORATED AS A RESULT. HE SAID THAT MORE HAD TO BE DONE NOW TO HELP BOAT REFUGEES AND TO END THE PIRATE ATTACKS. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT DIMINISHING RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES WOULD LEAD THE RTG TO TAKE DRASTIC MEASURES TO END THE REFUGEE INFLUX. HE SAID IT WAS UP TO THE U.S. TO SPEAK PLAINLY AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL (DURING THE PREM VISIT) IN ORDER TO FORESTALL SUCH ACTION. WINTER ALSO WANTED TO SEE RENEWED EFFORT TO OBTAIN THE RELEASE OF RE-EDUCATION CAMP PRISONERS IN VIETNAM. HE FELT IT WAS UP TO THE U.S. TO DO MORE IN THIS REGARD. PETER POND OF THE CAMBODIAN CRISIS COMMITTEE COMMENDED THE THAI GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE FOR THEIR GENEROUS ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES OVER THE YEARS. HE CALLED UPON THE U.S. TO ACCEPT MORE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

84 3884760

SCP

PAGE 005

NC 3884760

TOR: 120627Z APR 84

KHMER REFUGEES FROM KHAO-I-DANG AND SAID THAT SOME 15,000 OF THEM WERE "UNDOCUMENTED", "UNFED" AND SUBJECT TO FORCIBLE REPATRIATION BY THAILAND UNLESS THE U.S. AND OTHER RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES AGREED TO TAKE THEM. HE ALSO URGED THE U.S. TO ADMIT THOSE KHMER ON THE THAI BORDER WHO HAVE RELATIVES IN THE U.S. HE SAID THAT THE SITUATION WITHIN CAMBODIA WAS GRIM AND THAT THE RICE HARVEST WAS A DISASTER. THESE TERRIBLE CONDITIONS MADE PEACE INITIATIVES EVEN MORE URGENT AND POND CALLED FOR THE U.S. TO TAKE THE LEAD IN THIS AREA. FINALLY, POND SUPPORTED A SEPARATE ODP CEILING COUPLED WITH A SMALL INCREASE IN THE 50,000 FY-85 EAST ASIA ADMISSIONS CEILING AS A WAY OF SIGNALING TO THE THAI THE NEED TO CONTINUE TO INSURE FIRST ASYLUM. (RP/PC: 0111T) SHULTZ

END OF MESSAGE

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